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Reviews and Notes

Household Manufactures in the United States, 1640-1860, A Study in Industrial History, By ROLLA MILTON TRYON, Assistant Professor of the Teaching of History, University of Chicago. The University of Chicago Press, 1917; pp. xii, 413. Price \$2.00 net.

DR. TRYON might have called his volume the barometer of progress. In general household manufactures in the United States rose among the thriftier classes of our population, indicating by their rise with fair accuracy the place and rate of progress. Likewise, in their decline they indicate with equal accuracy the growing wealth and culture. The phenomenon is not different from the taking on and casting off of a new fashion, or the coming and going of a new farm implement. At one time it is a badge of progress, at another it is the opposite. Household manufactures also, as Dr. Tryon points out, characterized certain racial groups, the Puritans, Dutch, Germans and Scotch being leaders. Certain economic conditions also had much to do with the prevalence of household manufactures. Small farms, large families, and remoteness from markets, one or all, were accompanying conditions.

Such is the theme of the book. The author has done his work thoroughly, basing his brief comment on a vast amount of data. He has necessarily used a great many terms, common in the old days, but long since passed out of everyday use, just as have the things themselves. A glossary, such as one finds in an edition of Burns or Chaucer, would not be amiss.

The story is a modest, homely one and in these times of war will not be read as widely as it merits. What lessons the story has for us is problematical. Whether a partial return to these old customs or a further discarding is preferable are questions of discussion at present. It is a question of emphasizing the old-fashioned, all-round type of individuality, or the narrow expert; it is a contest between the home and community units. Whatever the result of these the volume of Dr. Tryon will help to clarify the issues. It will also be found valuable in manual training work in schools where emphasis is laid on the historical development of industry.